

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	Matador Spring Development
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	September , 2008
<b>Proponent:</b>	Matador Cattle Company
<b>Location:</b>	Section 16, T9S – R6W
<b>County:</b>	Beaverhead County

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Proponent proposes to develop and install a spring tank, underground pipeline and stock water tank to water cattle on State ground in Section 16 T 9S – R 6W. The spring box will be installed using a track hoe and will be placed at the outlet of a wet swampy area where two draws come together. An underground pipeline will be run for approximately 200 yards to a stock tank. A fence will be constructed around the riparian area to prevent any further damage by cattle.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

#### 1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

*Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.*

DNRC Archeologist, Patrick Rennie  
Fish Wildlife and Parks Wildlife Biologist, Bob Brannon  
NRIS Natural History Survey  
Lessee; Matador Cattle Company

#### 2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

NA

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

- A. **No Action Alternative;** Not allow Matador Cattle Co. to install the spring box, underground pipeline, stock water tank and fence off the riparian area.
- B. **Action Alternative;** Allow proposal to proceed; install spring box, underground pipeline, stock tank and fence riparian area.

### III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

#### 4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

*Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.*

The spring box will be installed in a wet swampy area that is currently being trampled by cattle. The area has become hummocky and is causing the area to be disturbed and muddy. The soils in the area are listed as Barbarela-Foolhen complex and have a parent material of Alluvium. These types of soils are found on gentle drainages where seeps and minor flows are found.

The installation of the spring box, pipeline, stock water tank and fencing of the riparian area would improve the water quality of the spring and help the site to recover from the overuse by cattle.

**5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:**

*Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.*

There are a number of unnamed springs that occur in the area. These springs don't deliver to any creeks or streams or rivers. Most of the draws are ephemeral draws with no water flows. The current state of the spring in the area is poor due to the area having the only standing water on the section. This has caused the cattle to spend most of their time around the riparian area causing trampling and damage to the spring. This proposal would help improve the water quality of the spring by keeping the cattle out.

**6. AIR QUALITY:**

*What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.*

There will be no air quality issues associated with this proposal. The location is an isolated site away from populated areas. Construction should take about three days. Some dust will be put into the atmosphere during the construction of this project, however no long term impacts will occur.

**7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:**

*What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.*

An NRIS search of this section didn't reveal any rare plants or cover types. The installation of the spring will help reduce over use by cattle, and reduce vegetation trampling around the spring and the riparian area.

**8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:**

*Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.*

The installation of the stock water tank will not affect the use of the area by terrestrial, avian and aquatic life. The proposal may improve use of the spring by keeping the cattle from trampling the vegetation around the spring. Installation of the stock tank will be of short duration and overall disturbance of Terrestrial, Avian, and aquatic life will be minimal. No direct, indirect or cumulative effects to terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats are foreseen from this proposal.

**9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:**

*Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.*

The Montana Natural Heritage program was contacted regarding species of concern within the project area. . The endangered Gray Wolf was listed as possibly traveling through the area, along with three sensitive species of concern; Greater Sage Grouse, Black – tailed Jack Rabbit and Great Basin Pocket Mouse.

**Gray Wolf (*Canis Lupus*)** Wolves are distributed throughout Southwest Montana. The project would not have any measurable effect on wolf prey or wolves, thus direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are not anticipated.

**Greater Sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)** Greater sage Grouse use has been recorded in the project area. The DNRC is not aware of any important breeding leks in the vicinity. If sage-grouse are using the tract, they could be directly disturbed and displaced by activities associated with this project; however, the disturbance would be short term and would not be expected to have a measureable impact on sage –grouse. Measurable direct, indirect, or cumulative effects would not be anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

**Black-tailed Jack Rabbit (*Lepus californicus*)** Black-tailed Jack Rabbits use has been recorded in the project area. The DNRC is not aware of any dens with in the project area. Rabbits could be disturbed and displaced by activities associated with this project; however, the disturbance would be short term and would not be expected to have a measureable impact on Black-tailed Jack Rabbits. Measureable direct, indirect, or cumulative effects would not be anticipated as a result of this proposed project.

**Greater Basin Pocket Mouse (*Perognathus parvus*)** The Great Basin Pocket Mouse use has been recorded near the project area. The project could disturb any mice in the area during the construction phase of this project; however the project is of short duration. Measurable direct, indirect or cumulative effects are not anticipated from this project on the Greater Basin Pocket mouse.

#### **10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

*Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.*

Chuck Maddox, Land Use Specialist on the Dillon Unit identified obsidian flakes near the area where the spring box development would occur. Patrick Renee DNRC Archeologist would like to be present on site during the installation of the spring box and pipeline if the proposed project is allowed to proceed. Patrick feels that there is a small chance that some artifacts could be found and would like to be present to record any thing that is uncovered.

#### **11. AESTHETICS:**

*Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.*

The project is located in an isolated area away from public view. The area receives the most traffic during the big game hunting season and will not be visible from the only public road in the area. The project will not have a significant impact to the aesthetics. The main activity in this area is cattle grazing and a new spring development will not impact the overall character of the landscape.

#### **12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:**

*Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.*

Demands on environmental resources will be minimal. The DNRC Dillon Unit is unaware of any planned or future projects planned for the area.

#### **13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:**

*List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.*

A field examination of this section was completed in September of 2006. No management concerns were found at that time. Banks of the riparian area were noted as being moderately stable, but were showing some trampling impacts. Vegetation along stream banks was good with decreaser's and sedges abundant.

#### IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES* potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.
- Explain **POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS** following each resource heading.
- Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

##### 14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

None

##### 15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

*Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.*

The installation of the spring box, underground pipeline, stock tank and fencing of the riparian area will benefit the grazing on this state section and help provide for long term proper management of this section.

##### 16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

*Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.*

The project is a small project but will provide a contractor in the Dillon area with a few days work.

##### 17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

*Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.*

The project will provide little tax revenue to the county and state.

##### 18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

*Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.*

None.

##### 19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

*List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.*

None.

##### 20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

*Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.*

None.

##### 21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

*Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.*

None.

**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

None.

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

*How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?*

None.

**24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:**

*Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.*

This project will be listed as an improvement on the lessee's lease.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Tim Egan	<b>Date:</b> 9/12/08
	<b>Title:</b> Unit Manager	

**V. FINDING****25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Authorize improvement to allow the spring development project.

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

Significant impacts are not anticipated as a result of the proposed project. The spring development will likely improve the conditions within the riparian habitat. There are no other unusual or important habitats within the project area which are expected to be impacted. The DNRC Archeologist will be contacted prior to excavation to monitor and survey for hidden cultural resources in the unlikely event some may be present and unearthed during construction.

**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**
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EIS

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More Detailed EA

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No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Garry Williams
	<b>Title:</b> Area Manager—central land Office
<b>Signature:</b> /S/ Garry Williams	<b>Date:</b> 9/12/2008

